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## DOCUMENTS

### *Letters of Sir George Simpson, 1841-1843.*

THE documents printed herewith were copied from papers preserved in the Public Record Office at London. All except the first are from the pen of Sir George Simpson; that one, a letter from Sir John Pelly to Lord Aberdeen, is included because it makes an admirable introduction for the Simpson letters, besides possessing a distinct historical value of its own.

These papers stand at the beginning of an extended series of Hudson's Bay Company documents which, during the years 1842 to 1846, found their way into the archives of the British government. The Oregon boundary controversy was in its final stages, negotiations between Great Britain and the United States on that subject being practically continuous from the date of Lord Ashburton's mission in the spring of 1842 to June, 1846, when the treaty defining the northern boundary of Oregon was concluded. The Foreign Office was therefore obliged to keep itself posted relative to conditions in the disputed territory, and since the Hudson's Bay Company represented the only important British interest there, and maintained a regular communication between London and the Columbia River, the reports and letters of their agents stationed in Oregon and of other agents who, like Simpson, paid official visits to the country, would naturally assume in the eyes of the government a unique importance. Accordingly, Governor Pelly, of the Hudson's Bay Company, usually forwarded such matter to the Foreign Office.<sup>1</sup> Pelly seems to have done this voluntarily, perhaps in consequence of a general understanding with Lord Aberdeen. Once only, so far as the records show, did the government specifically ask him for information; that was in February, 1845, when the exigencies of diplomacy rendered it necessary for them to obtain without delay the latest advices as to the comparative strength of the British and American settlements in the Oregon country.

<sup>1</sup> On July 18, 1846, the Hudson's Bay Company enclosed to the Foreign Office a list of the documents forwarded since the date of Pelly's letter printed herewith. The list, which is incomplete, includes the descriptions of fourteen documents, some of them of considerable length. Copies of these were brought away by the writer, with the permission of the Foreign Office, and they are now preserved, with other documents bearing on the Oregon question found in the British Archives, in the library of the University of Oregon.

The Simpson letter of March 10, 1842, written from Honolulu, differs from all the other Hudson's Bay documents in that it is virtually the report of a government agent after a careful examination of the affairs of the Pacific Coast and islands. Simpson is here writing not for the purpose of giving information to his company about trade conditions, but to inform the government about conditions affecting British interests and prospects in Oregon, in California and in the Sandwich Islands. True, his commission emanated from Lord Palmerston, and his report, quite in keeping with the bold and high-handed diplomacy of that minister, passed into the hands of Lord Aberdeen, a man of very different character. Yet there is abundant evidence to prove that Simpson's recommendations received serious attention. The present writer believes that this letter was one chief cause of the new interest which from that time the government manifested in the settlement of the Oregon question on the one hand, and in the political destiny of California and the Sandwich Islands on the other. As regards the islands, Simpson's visit not only synchronizes with the important political developments connected with the Hawaiian mission to the great powers in 1842-1843, but, according to these documents, Simpson suggested that mission to Tamehameha III. and got himself appointed one of the king's envoys.

JOSEPH SCHAFER.

I. LETTER OF SIR JOHN H. PELLY TO THE EARL OF ABERDEEN.<sup>2</sup>

HUDSON'S BAY HOUSE, 23rd January, 1843.

*My Lord:*

I some time ago had the honor of laying before your Lordship a despatch from Sir George Simpson, dated Woahoo<sup>3</sup> the 10th March last, respecting the Columbia River, California and the Sandwich Islands, which your Lordship returned to me on the 27th August.

At an interview which you favored me with when delivering that communication, I apprised your Lordship that Sir G. Simpson, filling the office of Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company's Territories, was then occupied on a survey of inspection of the Company's settlements and on several business arrangements, rendering it necessary for him to cross the continent of America from Canada to the outlet of the Columbia River; to visit California, the Sandwich Islands, the Russian settlements on the North West Coast of America; thence to cross the Northern Pacific to Ochotsk and to return via Siberia and Russia to England:—and that soon after his arrival in this country, I should do

<sup>2</sup> Sir John Pelly was governor of the Hudson's Bay Company; Lord Aberdeen was secretary of state for the foreign department. The manuscript of the letter is in "Foreign Office, America, 399; Domestic, Various, January to March, 1843".

<sup>3</sup> Oahu.

myself the honor of communicating to your Lordship any further information I might collect from Sir George's Reports, in reference to the countries he had visited, which I might consider likely to be interesting to your Lordship.

In pursuance of that intention I now hand to your Lordship annexed, extracts from Sir George Simpson's despatch dated Vancouver (Columbia River) 25th November, 1841, wherein he reports on the character of some parts of the North American Continent through which he passed;—on the settlement by British subjects and citizens of the United States, of the country on the Banks of the Columbia River, designated in the United States "the Oregon Territory", the conflicting claims to which of Great Britain and the United States form a leading feature of the last message of the President:—on the visit of the United States Discovery Expedition, under the command of Commodore Wilkes, to the Columbia River; on the navigation and prospects of trade of that part of the country and of the North West Coast from the mouth of the Columbia River up to Lat. 54 degrees, 40', the southern Russian boundary:—and on the trade and establishments of the Russian American Company to the northward of that point.

I further beg to draw your Lordship's attention to the annexed extracts from Sir George's despatch dated Woahoo, 1st March 1842, and to his letter dated Lahaina 24th March, wherein he notices several points not mentioned in his letter of the 10th March in reference to California, its commerce and capabilities, likewise in reference to the trade of the Sandwich Islands and to communications he had with the King and government of these Islands;—and I have likewise to draw your Lordship's attention to extracts from that gentleman's despatches dated Ochotsk 6th July and London 16th November, on the whale fishery of the Northern Pacific, on the trade of the Russian American Company, and narrating the leading features of his travels from New Archangel - - - through Siberia and Russia.

On taking his departure from the Sandwich Islands, Sir George was charged with a letter from Tamahameha III. and Kaukauhuohi, the King and Queen Regent of these Islands, addressed to Her Majesty, which I now beg to forward to your Lordship. After writing that letter the Sandwich Islands government came to the determination of sending their principal adviser, or Prime Minister, Mr. William Richards (an American subject who was previously occupied as a missionary at those Islands) in the capacity of envoy to Europe, as noticed in Sir George's letter of 24th March. By a letter of recent date from Mr. Richards, I learn he left the Sandwich Islands in August accompanied by a native chief, Haalilio, for this country, passing by Mexico and the United States, and that he may be expected here from day to day; and as Mr. Richards will in all probability be regulated by the opinion and advice of Mr. Colville, Sir G. Simpson and myself, as to the mode of conveying to your Lordship the object of his mission, I shall in the meantime be glad if your Lordship would favor me with your instructions on that head.

Sir George Simpson is now in London and will in the course of a few weeks hence be prepared to take his departure for Canada and the interior of Hudson's Bay, and as he may be possessed of further information than is conveyed in the accompanying extracts, in reference to the countries through which he has been travelling, which might be

interesting to your Lordship, I beg that your Lordship will be pleased to favor me with an interview accompanied by that gentleman.

I have the honor to be,

My Lord,

Yr. Lordship's mo. obedt. Humb. Svt.

J. H. PELLY Gov.

The Right Honorable,

The Earl of Aberdeen.

II. EXTRACTS FROM DISPATCH OF SIR GEORGE SIMPSON TO THE GOVERNOR, DEPUTY GOVERNOR, AND COMMITTEE OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY, DATED FORT VANCOUVER, NOVEMBER 25, 1841.<sup>4</sup>

*Par. 2.*

. . . From Fort Colville we descended the Columbia River by boat, touching at Okanogan and Walla Walla and arrived at Fort Vancouver on the 25th August.<sup>5</sup> . . .

*Par. 4.*

After crossing the mountains the first permanent establishment I visited was Fort Colville, which is intended to protect and collect the trade of the upper Columbia, and of the Kootenai and Flathead countries which lie to the north and east of that post. I am concerned to say the returns are gradually diminishing from year to year; this arises from no want of attention to the management of the district, but from the exhausted state of the country, which has been closely wrought for many years without any intermission. In the present unsettled state of the boundary line it would be impolitic to make any attempt to preserve or recruit this once valuable country, as it would attract the attention of the American trappers, so that there is little prospect of any amendment taking place in its affairs. Here there are many extensive tracts of country well adapted for colonization and at Colville there is an excellent farm, yielding bountiful harvests of maize, wheat, and other crops.

*Par. 10.*

There is not at present any organized trapping expedition belonging to the United States employed in the Snake country, although there are several straggling parties, the debris of former expeditions. One of these parties headed by a Mr. Frabb<sup>6</sup> was this season cut off by a party of Scioux, . . . The operations of these trappers being principally confined to the American territory east of the mountains and to the country situated to the southward of Lewis and Clark's River, and eastward of the Buenaventura Valley it cannot be said that they interfere injuriously with us in any shape.

*Par. 12.*

Resuming the narrative of our voyage—We took our departure from Walla Walla, remaining there but a few hours, and on the 25th August arrived at Fort Vancouver, where the intermittent fever was prevailing as usual at this season of the year. Besides the officers and people belonging to this establishment, I here found Commodore Wilkes, Cap-

<sup>4</sup> Foreign Office, America, 399; Domestic, Various, January to March, 1843.

<sup>5</sup> They left Red River July 3.

<sup>6</sup> Henry Fraeb. See Chittenden, *History of the American Fur Trade in the Far West*, I. 260.

tain Hudson, and other officers of the United States Discovery Expedition. Three of the five discovery vessels were on the river, say, the *Porpoise* sloop of war, the *Flying Fish*, tender; and the *Oregon* (Capt. Thomas Perkins) store ship. The *Peacock* sloop of war had been totally lost on the Columbia bar, a few weeks previous to my arrival, but the officers and crew were providentially saved, and the *Vincennes* corvette, had proceeded from Puget Sound direct to San Francisco, there to await the arrival of Commodore Wilkes, with the other vessels. The expedition was preceded here by the schooner *Wave*, with supplies from the Sandwich Islands for its use. The *Wave*, it will be recollected was the same vessel that had been chartered by the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Company in the month of November last, for the transport of goods to the Sandwich Islands, and had been rechartered from thence by Commodore Wilkes, for the transport of the supplies in question to the Columbia.

*Par. 13.*

This expedition was despatched by the United States Government in 1838<sup>7</sup> . . . the N. W. coast of America, touching at Puget Sound and the Columbia, from whence they intended proceeding to California—thence to the Sandwich Islands: thence to the East Indies, and thence home via Cape of Good Hope. While the expedition was with us, they surveyed the coast from Puget Sound to Fraser's River, made some partial surveys in the Straits of Juan de Fuca, and between Cape Flattery and the mouth of the Columbia. They likewise surveyed the Columbia River from the bar to the Cascade Portage, and the Willamette up to the Falls. They moreover made excursions in the interior, crossing from Puget's Sound to Okanogon, and visiting Forts Colville and Nez Percé; crossed the Cowlitz portage, and closely examined the country on the banks of the Willamette, forwarding a land party through the Buenaventura Valley to San Francisco.<sup>8</sup>

*Par. 14.*

Every civility and attention were shewn to Commodore Wilkes and his officers, and such facilities afforded them for prosecuting the objects of the expedition as our means would admit, and it is satisfactory to be enabled to say that the Commodore seemed fully to appreciate the attentions shewn to himself, and his officers, as will appear from a letter addressed to Chief Factors McLoughlin and Douglas, copy of which is herewith forwarded. Both at the Sandwich Islands and the Columbia, likewise at Puget Sound, the Expedition received supplies from the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Company's stores, amounting at this place to £3,500, and at the Islands to £—, for which they paid by drafts as advised in the 62 paragraph.

*Par. 15.*

Learning that the *Beaver* steamer was, agreeably to previous arrangement, in readiness at Puget Sound to convey me to the North West Coast on a tour of inspection of the posts in that quarter, and on a visit to the Russian American Company's principal depot at Sitka, I took my departure from Fort Vancouver (after a stay there of six

<sup>7</sup> He traces the movements of the expedition through the southern seas, where it made many discoveries, to the Sandwich Islands.

<sup>8</sup> All of the above paragraph is quoted in the extracts from Simpson's letter of November 25, 1841, which accompany his letter of March 10, 1842, in Foreign Office, America, 388; the paragraph was emphasized by means of a line drawn along the margin.

days) on the 1st of September, accompanied by Chief Factor Douglas; touched at the pastoral establishment on Multnomah Island, ascended the Cowlitz River, visited the Puget Sound Company's tillage farm at the head of that river, crossed the Cowlitz portage to Nisqually, a distance of from 55 to 60 miles, and reached that establishment on the evening of the 4th.

*Par. 16.*

Starting from Nisqually . . . on the 6th September, we proceeded northwards between Vancouver's Island and the mainland, passing through the Gulf of Georgia, Johnston's Strait, Queen Charlotte's Sound, and inside Calvert's Island to Fort McLoughlin, situated on an island near Mill Bank Sound (the position of which is in Lat. 52°, 6', Long. 132°, 16') where we arrived on the 15th of September, having of the ten days occupied in getting from Nisqually to Fort McLoughlin been detained wood cutting, trading with the Quakeolths and Newettee Tribes, and wind and fog bound about half the time.

Fort McLoughlin is principally maintained on country provisions, say, fish in great abundance and variety, venison and potatoes; and the natives who were at one time troublesome are now comparatively peaceable towards the establishment, more from a feeling that they are to a certain extent in our power, than from any good disposition towards us.

*Par. 16.*

We took our departure from Fort McLoughlin on the 16th and passing through Princess Royal and Grenville Canals, and Chatham Sound, arrived at Fort Simpson the following day. This establishment which is the most important on the coast, is situated in about Lat. 54°, 34', Long. 130°, 38' near Dundas Island, and close upon the Russian Southern Boundary. It is visited by a great many Indians occupying the Islands and continental shores to a considerable distance—among whom are the inhabitants of 5 villages on the mainland, likewise by the natives of Queen Charlotte's Island by the inhabitants of Tomgas and by those of Kygarnie, one of the islands forming the Prince of Wales's Archipelago (Russian Territory) in all a population of about 14,000 souls.

There is a complement of two officers and 18 men at this post, where the means of living are abundant, consisting principally of fish, venison, and potatoes, and a large body of Chimseeans have seated themselves down in the neighborhood as the home guards of the post. In any point of view this is a valuable and important establishment and ought to be maintained as the depot of the coast while we have anything to do with its affairs.

*Par. 18.*

Leaving Fort Simpson on the 18th, we immediately entered within the Russian Southern Boundary, and passing through the Canal de Reveille<sup>9</sup> and Clarence Straits, arrived at Stikine on the 20th. This establishment, of which we obtained possession on the 1st of June last year (1840) under the arrangement of the 6th of February, 1839, is situated on the north end of the Duke of York's Island, near Port Highfield, 4 to 5 miles south of the outlet of the Stikine or Pelly's River, in Lat. 56°, 33', Long. 134°, 14', and was in the first instance formed here by the Russian American Company in 1833, with the view of protecting their trade, which they had every reason to suppose would be endangered by the establishment which the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Company then

<sup>9</sup> Revilla-Gigedo.

contemplated forming within the British Territory up the Stikine River. The post is frequented by the Secatquonay, who occupy the country about the mouth of the river and the islands contiguous, and running parallel to that part of the coast. It is likewise frequented by the natives of 3 villages situated on the islands, to the trade of which we do not consider that we have any claim under the existing arrangement.

The complement of people at this establishment is two officers and 18 men, which notwithstanding the good disposition shown by the natives cannot with safety be reduced. The post is maintained on fish and venison which are here produced in great abundance from the natives at a very cheap rate.

*Par. 19.*

We remained at Stikine but a few hours, taking our departure thence on the afternoon of the 20th, and passing through Wrangel's Straits, and Prince Fredericks Sound, arrived at Tacom on the 22nd. This establishment is situated in about Lat.  $58^{\circ}$ ,  $4'$ , Long.  $133^{\circ}$ ,  $45'$ , and was intended to have been placed at the mouth of Tacom River but no favorable situation having been found for an establishment, it was erected on its present site, on the mainland, between two rivers, the Sitka and Tacom, about 15 miles distant from each. It is frequented by a great many Indians occupying the continental shore both to the northward and the southward, likewise by some of the islanders; in all, from 4,000 to 5,000 souls are more or less dependent on this establishment for their supplies.

The complement of people at this establishment is 2 officers and 22 men. It is principally maintained on venison got here as at the other establishments on the coast at so cheap a rate from the natives, that we absolutely make a profit in our consumption of provisions, the skin of the animal selling for much more than is paid for the whole carcass. Nearly all the returns that are collected at this establishment are brought from the British territory, inland of the Russian line of demarcation running parallel with the coast, and traded by the coast Indians from those inhabiting the interior country, very few being hunted by themselves.

*Par. 21.*

When the arrangement by which we became possessed of the Russian Territory to the north of  $54^{\circ 10'}$  was first entered into, it was in contemplation to form a chain of posts along the coast up to the outlet of Cross Sound, and from those establishments to form outposts in the interior under an impression that the country between the coast and the Rocky Mountains was of much greater extent, more numerous inhabited, and more valuable than we have since ascertained it to be. There are only two streams falling into the Ocean between the Russian Southern Boundary and Cape Spencer; those are the Stikine and Tacom Rivers, the former being navigable in seasons of high water for about 40 to 50 miles by the steam vessel, and afterwards by canoes; and the other by small craft only. There is a range of mountains running along the coast, extending inland about 60 miles, beyond which there is a district of level country partially wooded; but as there are few lakes in the interior, it is not supposed that the presence of establishments would tend materially to encrease the quantity of furs at present collected so that all idea of occupying the interior country with

<sup>10</sup>  $54^{\circ}$   $40'$ .



posts during the existence of the present arrangement with the Russians is now abandoned.

*Par. 27.*

The climate of the N. W. Coast to the northward differs very much from that of the country to the southward of Lat. 49° arising I conceive in addition to the difference in latitude in a great degree from the character of the country, which north of that point is exceedingly mountainous, and the tops of many of the mountains covered with perpetual snows, while north of Stikine glaciers are to be seen in many of the valleys to the water side, and floating ice in several of the Sounds and straits all the year round. From our departure from Red River settlement to the time of our arrival at Stikine we had the finest weather that can well be imagined, but there it became wet and stormy and at Tacom, we were detained, in consequence, three days, starting from thence on the 25th and passing through Stephen Passage, Chatham and Peril Straits, arrived at Sitka on the 26th, where we were received with every mark of attention and kindness by Governor Etholine and other Russian officers at that establishment.

*Par. 29.*

. . . Their [*i. e.*, the Russian] tariff of trade is nearly the same as ours; but notwithstanding the terms of the convention between Great Britain and Russia of February 1825, I find that a considerable quantity of spirituous liquors is disposed of by them to Indians in barter for both furs and provisions.

We have discontinued the use of this article upon the coast as a medium of barter except in the immediate vicinity of the Russian establishments ever since the Americans [sea farers? seal-fishers?] have withdrawn; and the natives are become so perfectly reconciled to the privation that in the whole course of my travels this season, where the use of it was discontinued, I only heard one inquiry respecting the article of rum. With a view to the well being of the Indian population of the coast, and to guard as much as possible against even the semblance of competition, I suggested to Governor Etholine that the use of spirituous liquors should be discontinued by both parties, on a date that may hereafter be agreed upon previous to the 31st December 1843, and I have much satisfaction in saying that he readily assented to that arrangement.

*Far. 32.*

The Russian American Company have not yet abandoned their establishment of Bodega in California, being unable to effect a sale of their buildings and stock. Their stock consists principally of sheep, cattle, horses, agricultural implements, etc, all of which has for some time past been offered for sale at the round sum of 30,000 dollars. Gov. Etholine however foreseeing the difficulty of obtaining payment should a sale be effected to any of the people of California, said he should feel disposed to accept a much lower price from the Hudson's Bay Company, and I have no doubt that the whole might be purchased at from 15,000 to 20,000 dollars. The Russian American Company admit they have no title to the soil, beyond what they have acquired by occupation. This the Mexican Govt. does not recognize; but they cannot dislodge them, the Russian force there having usually been 150 men, although now that they are about to withdraw it is reduced to 50. Bodega is not well situated for trade, nor is the country well adapted

for agriculture; and as any title the Russian American Company could give us would be of no avail unless backed by a force of 80 to 100 men, I do not see that any good can be obtained by making the purchase on any terms. Under these circumstances, I made him no offer, nor did I encourage the hope of our becoming purchasers.

*Par. 35.*

On our way back to Fort Vancouver, where we arrived on the 22nd of October, our voyage to and from Sitka and the other establishments already mentioned having occupied fifty-two days, I had another opportunity of visiting the establishments of Nisqually and the Cowlitz Farms, the former of which may be said principally to be occupied, and the latter entirely so, with the affairs of the Puget Sound Company.

*Par. 37.*

There is a large extent of fine pastoral land in the neighborhood of Nisqually, covered with a tufty nutritious grass peculiar to the country. The soil, however, being light and shingly, is not so well adapted for tillage, but by proper attention it may be improved.

*Par. 39.*

The Puget Sound Company's principal tillage farm is upon the Cowlitz Portage, at the head of the Cowlitz River, where the soil is productive, being a mixture of sand and decayed vegetable matter. The plain upon which the farm now occupied is situated, contains about 3,000 acres, of which about 1,200 are occupied by the Roman Catholic Mission and six settlers, retired servants of the Company, and the remaining 1,800 acres are occupied by the Puget Sound Company, of which 1,000 acres are under cultivation, which produced this season about 8,000 bushels of wheat, and 4,000 bushels of oats, barley, and pease, besides potatoes. The wheat is of excellent quality, weighing about 68 pounds to the bushel.

*Par. 40.*

Between the head of the Cowlitz River and the shores of Puget Sound there is a chain of plains, as per the accompanying sketch and description, some of which are well adapted both for tillage and pasture farms, with a considerable quantity of plain country upon the shores of Puget's Sound and Hood's Canal, and upon the banks of the Checuy-lis [Chehalis] and Black Rivers, very favorable for settlement, the produce of which will find an outlet for a foreign market by the Straits of de Fuca, and from the partial examination that has been made of the southern end of Vancouver's and Whidby's Islands, these likewise appear to be very advantageous situations for colonization and agricultural settlements. The Straits of de Fuca afford a safe and ready access at all seasons to these districts of country, where there are many safe and commodious harbors; and as the climate is healthy, the intermittent fever being unknown in that quarter, there is no doubt that that country will, in due time, become important as regards settlement and commerce, while the country in the vicinity of the coast, bordering on the Columbia and Willamette Rivers, so much spoken of in the United States as the Eldorado of the shores of the Northern Pacific, must from the dangers of the Bar, and the impediments of the navigation, together with its unhealthiness, sink in public estimation.

*Par. 41.*

On my arrival from the N. W. Coast I found the emigrants from

Red River safely arrived at Fort Vancouver, amounting in all to 116 souls. Of these 14 heads of families, amounting in all to 77 souls, principally English half breeds, have located at Nisqually and are to hold their farms under the Puget Sound Company on "halves" being provided with sheep, cattle, etc as per agreement entered into pursuant to the directions contained in a letter I wrote to C. F. [Chief Factor] Finlayson by your Honour's direction under date September 12, 1840. The remainder of the party being 7 families containing 38 souls are Canadians and half breeds, who being disinclined to crop the Cowlitz Portage to the seaboard, have been placed near the Cowlitz Farm, where advances will be made to them by the Hudson's Bay Company in seed, agricultural implements, etc. instead of their being placed on farms under the Puget Sound Company, in like manner as the other people; as from their previous habits of life, having devoted more of their time and attention to the chase than to agricultural pursuits, it was not likely they would turn to good account any stock that might be placed in their hands.

C. F. [Chief Factor] Douglas who accompanied some of the settlers in advance of the party, for the purpose of examining the country, speaks of it in such favorable terms that I have no doubt there will be many applications from Red River, and likewise from our retiring servants to settle there.

*Par. 46.*

The American Missionaries are making more rapid progress in the extension of their establishments and in the improvement of their farms, than in the ostensible objects of their residence in this country, as I cannot learn that they are successful, or taking much pains to be so, in the moral and religious instruction of the natives, who are perfectly bewildered by the variety of doctrines inculcated in this quarter. Their stations are as follows:

Maintained by the American Board of Missionaries [Commissioners] for Foreign Missions, vizt:

1. On the Clear Water River, 12 miles from its confluence with Snake River—Rev. H. H. Spalding and family.
2. On the Clear Water River, 62 miles from its confluence—Rev. Asa B. Smith and family.
3. On the road from Spokane to Colvile, 10 miles from Spokane River—Rev. Cushing Eells, Elkinah Walker and families.
4. On the Walla Walla River, 25 miles south<sup>11</sup> of Fort Nez Percé—Marcus Whitman, M. D., Wm. H. Gray, assist., and families.

#### METHODIST MISSIONS.

5. On the Willamette River, above Yamhill River—Rev. Jason Lee, Gustavus Hind [Hines], David Leslie, I. L. Babcock, M. D., Abernethy, storekeeper, 7 or 8 artisans and families.
6. Willamette Falls—Rev. A. F. Waller, H. H. Wilson [W. H. Willson], carpenter, and families.
7. Dalles of the Columbia—Rev. Daniel Lee, Rev. H. K. W. Perkins, 2 or 3 mechanics and families.
8. Clatsop Point.—Rev. J. H. Frost, Rev. W. W. Kone and families.
9. Nisqually—Rev. J. P. Richmond, M. D. and family.

<sup>11</sup> This should be "east".

## ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSIONS FROM ST. LOUIS, VIZT.

10. Pendant d'oreille Lake—Rev. Smith,<sup>12</sup> 3 priests, 5 lay brethren.

11. Cowlitz—Rev. Demers.

12. Willamette—Rev. F. N. Blanchet.

From the foregoing statement, it will be seen that the country is studded with missions, from the shores of the Pacific to the skirts of the Rocky Mountains, on the south side of the Columbia River, and that they are endeavoring to extend their influence to the northwards of that stream.

*Par. 47.*

Besides the missionary establishments, there is a population at the Willamette of 65 persons, Americans and others, who with their families have come to the country by the St. Louis communication, and 61 Canadians, retired servants of the Company, in all, 126 men, principally heads of families, making a population of about 500 souls. All these people have taken possession of tracts of country at pleasure, which they expect to retain under a good title arising from such possession, whenever the boundary question may be determined; and are generally very comfortably settled, bringing portions of their farms gradually under cultivation, and having large stocks of cattle brought from California.

*Par. 48.*

We have this season purchased from these settlers about 4,000 bushels wheat at 3/ [*i. e.*, three shillings] per bushel, which will be disposed of to advantage by resale, and instead of manifesting any opposition to these people by withholding supplies from them, or putting them to inconvenience in other respects, it is considered good policy to deal with them on such fair and reasonable terms, that no stranger would benefit materially by opposing us in our transactions with them; and with this view, we have it in contemplation to establish a mill for their accommodation on the Falls of the Willamette, which, if ever that settlement grows into importance, will be of great value, as there is a water power there to any extent, which was taken formal possession of on behalf of the Company several years ago, and where a small building has been lately erected, so as to strengthen our claim to it by possession. These settlers, although they possess little capital within themselves, are generally speaking industrious and enterprising; and as the whole deportment of the American part of the community is marked by a strong feeling of nationality, I have no doubt that they will when in a condition to do so, offer such encouragement to their countrymen in the United States or the Sandwich Islands, to import supplies for their use to be repaid in country produce, as may induce some of those speculative people to establish themselves in trade among them. They are now forming a joint stock company for the manufacture and export of flour, and are about to erect a mill on a part of Willamette Falls already spoken of, although C. F. [Chief Factor] McLoughlin had taken possession of it on behalf of the Company some years ago.

The American Methodist Missionaries are the projectors of this association, and are the prime movers in all public or important measures entered upon at the Willamette.

<sup>12</sup> Rev. P. J. de Smet, S. J.

*Par. 49.*

This little community, considering the materials of which it is composed, is in a more tranquil state than might be expected, one and all being anxious to stand well in public opinion, so that few cases of outrage or atrocity have as yet occurred among them. They are nevertheless prepared to take legal cognizance (under a code of their own formation) of such cases, whenever they occur. This last summer they made strong efforts to form a constitution for themselves, but the Company's influence over the Canadian settlers in a large measure defeated that object, which however ridiculous it may at a distance appear, might nevertheless be here attended with much inconvenience, if these would-be authorities had been enabled to carry their plans of self-government into effect.

*Par. 50.*

The two Roman Catholic priests, M. Blanchet and M. Demers who were brought into the country under the auspices of the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Company three years ago, have been very zealous in the discharge of their missionary duties; the former is established at the Willamette, and the latter at the Cowlitz settlement, and I consider it due to those gentlemen to say, that their presence has been productive of much good, and that we have every reason to be satisfied with them. Two other Canadian Roman Catholic priests, I think, might likewise be employed in this quarter with advantage; I have therefore to recommend that the request made last winter by the R. C. Bishop of Quebec for passages for two priests from Montreal for this part of the country be complied with.

*Par. 51.*

Although the people of the United States, who were engaged in trade on the N. W. Coast, have withdrawn from that branch of business, there are still among them some who think that something may yet be done in the way of trade in the Columbia River; and under that impression the Brig, *Thomas Perkins* of Boston, came to the river this season with a double object of purchasing salmon from the natives for the American market, and, if possible, of picking up a few skins.

*Par. 56.*

In California, it appears, Mr. Rae had much difficulty in coming to an arrangement with the authorities in regard to the duties which are most extravagant equal to about 50 per cent on the amount of the invoice; and in reference to port regulations, a compliance with which would have been exceedingly inconvenient.

*Par. 60.*

Among other unwelcome visitors here this year is a Frenchman named Eugene du Flot de Mofras, describing himself as an attaché of the French Embassy at Mexico; he says he was directed by his government to make a tour through California, and to visit this river if possible; but we have only his word for the accuracy of his statements. This person, it appears, made application to Mr. Rae for passage on the *Cowlitz* to this place, which I regret to say he very inconsiderately granted. His desire, I have reason to believe, was to have obtained a passage through the interior to Canada; but I imagine the coolness of his reception here has prevented his making application for that passage, and as we cannot get rid of him in any other way, he returns to California in the *Cowlitz* as our fellow-passenger.

*Par. 65.*

With reference to the 44th and 48th paragraphs, on the subject of grist and saw mills, I have, since writing the foregoing part of this despatch, made an excursion to the Willamette country, which occupied me four days; and I was surprised at the prosperous condition of that infant settlement which contains a population of about 350 souls, Canadians and their half breed families, and 150 souls, citizens of the United States and their families, besides about 1000 Indians of all ages who [are] maintained and employed by the settlers, to assist them in their agricultural and other labors. These settlers have among them about 3,000 head of cattle, 2,000 horses, 3,000 pigs, and their crops this year have amounted to about 30,000 to 35,000 bushels of grain of all kinds.

*Par. 66.*

The Willamette River falls from the south into the Columbia in two branches, the upper branch about 8 miles below Fort Vancouver. It is navigable at the season of high water by vessels of 300 to 400 tons burden, a distance of about 15 miles from where its waters unite with those of the Columbia, and to within a mile of the Falls of the Wallamette which are formed by a ledge of rocks that bars the river across from side to side, obstructing the navigation and rendering it necessary to make a portage of a few hundred yards. On this waterfall there are many fine situations for grist and saw mills and other machinery requiring water power. I visited this spot in 1828 accompanied by C. F. [Chief Factor] McLoughlin, when it was determined to take possession of a part of this water-fall for the Company; and soon afterwards possession was accordingly taken by blasting a canal through the locks and erecting a house upon the portage. Of late, however, the United States Methodist Mission, who seem to direct their attention more to temporal than spiritual affairs, and exercise good judgment in reference to commerce in the selection of their establishments and settlements, have taken possession of part of this waterfall, and disregarding our claims, founded on prior possession and occupation have seated themselves down on the portage, erecting buildings within our boundaries. There is no question that this country will soon grow into importance, and that the water privileges of the Falls will become exceedingly valuable, and as it appears very desirable that the Company should retain command of the import and export business of this settlement as long as possible, to the exclusion of strangers, it has on further consideration been deemed expedient to erect the machinery now supposed to be on its way from England at this place instead of Puget Sound as was contemplated when the 44th paragraph of this letter was written.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The dispute over the Willamette Falls—or Oregon City—land claim, which began as above described, is not yet laid aside. Many local writers, assuming that the claim was Dr. McLoughlin's private property, with which the company had nothing to do, have severely condemned the action of the missionaries in contesting it. In so doing they have chosen to accept McLoughlin's interested statement that the claim was taken for himself rather than the missionaries' interested statement that the claim was intended to give the British company a monopoly of the water privileges at the Falls. Simpson's testimony above clearly bears out the contention of the missionaries so far as the origin of the claim is concerned. It may be added that as late as March 29, 1845, Simpson wrote about "Our [the company's] water privileges on the Willamette".

III. EXTRACTS OF DISPATCHES FROM SIR GEORGE SIMPSON TO THE GOVERNOR, DEPUTY GOVERNOR, AND COMMITTEE OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY, DATED HONOLULU, MARCH 1, 1842.<sup>14</sup>

*Par. 2.*

A three weeks detention inside Cape Disappointment, watching a favorable opportunity for crossing the very dangerous bar off the entrance of the Columbia River, recalled my attention very forcibly to the importance of a depot being formed for such portion of the Company's business as is more immediately connected with the foreign trade and shipping department on some eligible part of the coast, instead of continuing Fort Vancouver as the great center of the business of the West side of the Continent, and exposing many lives and the whole of the valuable imports and exports of the country to a danger which is becoming more alarming every successive year.

*Par. 3.*

In measure as the natural resources, and sources of commerce of the Northern Pacific, and its shores, and interior country, develop themselves, in like measure does it become apparent that we cannot avail ourselves of them advantageously while entirely dependent on Fort Vancouver as the principal Depot; as, independent of the dangers of the bar, the time lost in watching opportunities either to get out or in (frequently from a month to six weeks, while three weeks more are often consumed after crossing the bar, in getting from Cape Disappointment up to Fort Vancouver) renders it impossible to calculate with any degree of certainty on the quantum of work that ought to be performed by the shipping, deranging the best laid plans, burdening the different branches of the business with very heavy shipping charges, and depriving us of the means of embarking in other branches of commerce, which might be carried on with great advantage, had we a depot eligibly situated on the coast.

*Par. 4.*

The southern end of Vancouver's Island, forming the northern side of the Straits of de Fuca, appears to me the best situation for such an establishment as is required. From the very superficial examination that has been made, it is ascertained there are several good harbors in that neighborhood, no place, however, has yet been found combining all the advantages required, the most important of which are a safe and acceptable harbor well situated for defense, with water power for grist and saw mills, abundance of timber for home consumption and exportation, and the adjacent country well adapted for tillage and pasture farms on an extensive scale. I had not an opportunity of landing on the southern end of the island; but from the distant view we had of it in passing between Puget's Sound and the Gulf of Georgia, and the report of C. F. [Chief Factor] McLoughlin, and others, who have been there, we have every reason to believe there will be no difficulty in finding an eligible situation in that quarter for the establishment required.

*Par. 7.*

There are two branches of Trade, one of which, the salmon fishery, has been carried on a limited scale from Forts Vancouver and Langley, and the other the whale fishery, to which we have never before directed our attention, [that] may, in our opinion, with great advantage, be carried on from the new depot. Immense shoals of salmon, and of

<sup>14</sup> Foreign Office, America, 399; Domestic, Various, January to March, 1843.

very superior quality, are to be found periodically between the main land and the shores of Vancouver's Island, and as the demand for that fish is encreasing and promises to become very great, both for the United States and the China market, commanding now at the Sandwich Islands from \$10.00 to \$12.00 per barrel of 180 lbs. I think the salmon fisheries of this coast are highly deserving of attention as a growing and almost inexhaustible source of trade.

*Par. 8.*

With regard to the whale fishery of the North West Coast, my attention was first directed to that branch of commerce while on my visit of inspection of the northern establishment last autumn. At each of those establishments, I saw sperm and Black oil in small quantities, which had been traded from the Indians, who occasionally killed and frequently found dead whales in channels and inlets of the coast, and who represented those animals as being excessively numerous. For many years, it has been known that whales were very numerous about the Straits of de Fuca, and in the Gulf of Georgia, and that the Indians of Cape Flattery and the Straits of de Fuca were expert, even with their bone lances, grass lines, and other rude implements of their own manufacture in killing them, the flesh or blubber being with them a favorite article of food, and the oil an article of trade or barter with the interior tribes. We soon afterwards learnt that a French whaler had been successful off the coast in the course of last summer, and while at California, I saw Capt. Hoyer, the master of a whaler outfitted from Woahoo, who represents the Northwest Coast as the best fishing ground in the Northern Pacific. The information given by this man may be depended upon. It was taken down in short-hand in a conversation with me, and was confirmed to the fullest extent, after my arrival at this place, where I learnt that upwards of 200 whalers will be employed next year between Lat. 52° and 57°, and Long. 144° and 152°.

*Par. 9.*

From these notes your Honours will [see] that an establishment in the Straits of de Fuca would be admirably adapted for prosecuting that branch of business with every prospect of success, being in the immediate vicinity, or in the heart of the best fishing grounds at present known. Vessels employed in the fishing might run in and out from month to month, as circumstances might render desirable, deliver their oil, receive refreshments or other supplies, and thus remain on their stations from year's end to year's end, following the "Right" whale during the summer, when the weather is moderate in the higher latitudes, and the spermaceti to the southward during the winter months, when there is no exposure to bad weather.

*Par. 12.*

There is a very large population of daring, fierce, and treacherous Indians on, and in the neighborhood of the southern shore of Vancouver's Island, so that a heavy establishment of people, say from 40 to 50 officers and men will be required, for its protection in the first instance; but with the occasional presence of the steamer, whose power and ubiquity has done more in my opinion to tame those daring hordes than all the other means to that end that have been brought into action by the whites, not only the new depot, but every other establishment on the coast may in due time be reduced in point of



numbers to as many only as are absolutely required to accomplish the work.

*Par. 15.*

. . . We got out of the river on the 21st December, in company with the Barque *Columbia*, she prosecuting her voyage to the Sandwich Islands on her way to England while we proceeded to California, touching at the ports of San Francisco, Monterey, and Santa Barbara. As we entered the first, on the 30th of December, we saw the Russian American Company's brig *Constantine* getting under weigh for Sitka, crowded with passengers, the officers and servants of that concern, late occupants of the Russian establishments of Ross and Bodega which they had evacuated or abandoned, selling the buildings, stock of cattle, horses and sheep, agricultural and other instruments, etc., on credit to a native of Switzerland named Sutter, lately settled on the Sacramento, for the sum of 30,000.00 dollars.

*Par. 16.<sup>15</sup>*

The establishments of Ross and Bodega . . . were formed . . . with the double object [of otter hunting] and of providing their establishments on the N. W. Coast where the soil and climate were unfavorable for a cultivation with grain, beef, and other agricultural supplies. . . their establishments were regularly garrisoned by a force of from 25 to 300 men, . . . [They soon destroyed the sea-otter by the wasteful methods employed in hunting]. After the loss of that profitable branch of trade, and the recent arrangement with the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Company, enabling them to obtain grain and other farm produce for the use of their northern establishments, cheaper than they could raise it, the Russian American Company very wisely determined on withdrawing from California, and by that resolution have benefitted their Association to the amount of upwards of £5,000 per annum.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Only such parts of this paragraph were copied as are not covered in Simpson's letter to Pelly of March 10, 1842.

<sup>16</sup> Paragraphs 19, 24, 26, 29, 32, 33 and 34 of the original dispatch are also copied in the letter of March 10. No. 19 relates to the company's trading house at Yerba Buena under Mr. Rae; 24 describes in severe terms, General Vallejo; in paragraph 26 the Mexican commercial restrictions are discussed. The company tried to land goods at San Francisco, but were not allowed to do so; they must go to Monterey, "the only port of entry on the coast, in the first instance". He describes Governor Alvarado much as in the letter of March 10. The 29th paragraph deals with Santa Barbara, which is described as the great place of resort for foreigners engaged in trade to California. Paragraphs 32, 33 and 34 contain Simpson's reflections on the advantages of California, if the country were in the hands of a more enlightened nation—much as in the letter of March 10. Speaking of the possibility of establishing a protectorate over California, Simpson says: "I shall not enlarge on this subject at present, especially so, as I shall have an opportunity of communicating with your honours personally thereon after my return to England the early part of next winter." The remainder of the letter as excerpted in this document refers to the Hawaiian Islands, and contains no important statement which is not covered in Simpson's letter of March 10, 1842.

IV. COPY OF A LETTER FROM SIR GEORGE SIMPSON TO SIR JOHN H. PELLY.<sup>17</sup>

HONOLULU, WOAHOO,  
March 10, 1842.

Dear Sir:

In accordance with a desire expressed previous to my departure from England by Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston, then respectively at the head of the Colonial and Foreign Offices, that I should communicate through you from time to time, whatever might occur to me in the course of my present journey as likely to be interesting to H. M.'s Government, in reference to the countries I was about to visit, I now beg to lay before you a brief outline of the information I have collected on these subjects.

By other communications you are aware that taking my departure from England in the early part of March last, I proceeded via the United States, Canada, the interior of Hudson's Bay, and across the continent to the mouth of the Columbia River, where I arrived in August. There I found the United States exploring expedition under the command of Commodore Wilkes immediately after the loss of the *Peacock* sloop of war, in crossing the bar at the Columbia River. Commodore Wilkes had, in the course of the summer, made a close survey of the Straits of Juan de Fuca, Puget Sound, Hood's Canal, and the Gulf of Georgia, up to the outlet of Frazer's River, in about Lat. 49°, while parties were employed under the direction of the several members of the scientific corps, in visiting the interior country.

Commodore Wilkes was by no means communicative on the object of these surveys and examinations; but I collected from a very intelligent and confidential member of the Expedition, that it was the intention of Captain Wilkes to recommend strongly to his government, to claim the whole of the territory on the shores of the Northern Pacific, from the Mexican Northern Boundary in Lat. 42° to the Russian Southern Boundary in Lat. 54°, 40'.<sup>18</sup>

Whether the United States Government will adopt this modest recommendation, or not, remains to be seen; but the gentleman connected with the Expedition, before alluded to, is rather more moderate than the Commodore, as he informed me it was *his* intention to recommend that a line drawn through the Straits of Juan de Fuca, till it struck the mainland south of Whidby's Island, and thence across to the Columbia River, opposite the outlet of the Nez Percé, or Southern Branch, should be accepted by which means the country to the southward of that line, with the harbors inside Cape Flattery, Hood's Canal, and Puget's Sound would belong to the United States; and to such claim he seemed to think Great Britain could not reasonably object, as she must see the justice of allowing the United States access to ports of refuge and refreshment, which they could not possess if a more southern bound-

<sup>17</sup> Foreign Office, America, 388; Domestic, Various, June and July, 1842. Original evidently received at Foreign Office not later than July, 1842, and returned to Pelly August 27, 1842.

<sup>18</sup> Wilkes's opinion of the importance of Puget Sound to the United States may be inferred from his statement, *Narrative of the U. S. Exploring Expedition*, V. 171, with reference to a future maritime state, embracing "two of the finest ports in the world—that within the Straits of Juan de Fuca, and San Francisco".

ary was determined upon, as the Columbia River, from the dangerous character of the bar at its outlet cannot be considered a port.<sup>19</sup>

Greenhow's recent publication<sup>20</sup> points out the grounds of claim of the United States and Great Britain, but whether he examines the subject fairly or not, you will be better able to judge, having all the information that we have been enabled to collect on this important question at the Hudson's Bay House, but I trust you will urge H. M. government not to consent to any boundary which would give to the United States any portion of the Territory north of the Columbia River; as any boundary north of that stream would deprive Great Britain of the only valuable part of the territory, the country to the northward of the Straits of de Fuca not being adapted for agriculture, or other purposes connected with colonization.

On the character and capabilities of the country, north and south of the Columbia River, I have already addressed you very fully in my official communications to the Company, to which I beg reference, should any information thereon be considered interesting to the Government.

From the Columbia I proceeded up the North West Coast to the Russian Territory, visiting the Russian American Company's principal Depot of Sitka. There I found an establishment of from 300 to 400 men, with a steamer and several armed vessels and the place garrisoned and occupied as a military establishment, the Governor or principal representative of the Company being a post captain in the Imperial Navy, and the subordinate officers holding naval and military rank, all receiving pay from the Government, as if on foreign service, as well as pay from the Company. I experienced from the Russian authorities every kindness and civility, the best understanding, I am happy to say, subsisting between them and the Hudson's Bay Company's officers in this quarter; and I have the satisfaction to say that both the Hudson's Bay Company and the Russian American Company benefit by their amicable relations.

While at Sitka I learnt from the Governor that he was instructed by the Russian American Company to abandon two stations that have been long occupied by them within the Mexican territory, at Ross and Bodega. The occupation of these establishments by the Russians, has been a subject of much speculative conjecture by the different travelers who have written upon California of late years. Russia may have contemplated the fostering of some claim upon that country from such occupation; and the Russian American Company in the meantime benefitted by it in the way of trade, having followed up the sea-otter hunts upon that coast with great activity until those valuable animals became quite exhausted. By their superior force, maintaining as they did, an establishment of 300 to 400 men, they set at defiance the authorities

<sup>19</sup> The officer referred to by Simpson was probably Captain William L. Hudson, who was second in command, and who was at Vancouver during Simpson's sojourn there, August 25 to September 1. See paragraph 12, letter of November 25, 1841, paragraph 12, *ante*, and Wilkes's *Narrative*, V. 122, 123. The line of boundary here described may have been recommended to the government; it has some points of similarity to a suggested line which was described, roughly, by Webster in his letter to Everett of November 28, 1842. *Private Correspondence*, II. 154.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Greenhow, *Memoir, Historical and Political, of the Northwest Coast* (Washington, 1840).

of California, who looked upon them as intruders: the Russian American Company, however, latterly finding the occupation of those places not only unprofitable, but attended with much outlay, with the sanction of their government, have this season abandoned Bodega and Ross, selling the buildings, together with their stock in trade, to a person of the name of Sutter, a Swiss recently become a citizen of Mexico, for a consideration of \$30,000. This sale was effected previously to my arrival, otherwise it is probable I should have made a purchase of the establishment for the Hudson's Bay Company with a view to the possibility of some claim being based thereon by Great Britain at a future period.<sup>21</sup>

I got back in the month of October to the Columbia River from my visit to the Russian settlements, and thence took my departure for California, touching at the ports of San Francisco, Monterey, and Santa Barbara. That country which is of great extent and possessing advantages of soil and climate unrivalled perhaps in any other part of the world, is in the hands of a very few indolent Californians, the descendants of the Spanish and Mexican soldiery, who were attached to the missions, by whom it was, in the first instance, settled. The whole population of that beautiful and extensive country, possessing 1200 miles of sea-coast, does not exceed 7,000, of whom 600 are foreigners, principally Americans.

California is nominally a Territory or dependency of the Republic of Mexico, which does not however attempt to exercise any dominion over it, its remote situation, together with the disturbed state of the mother country admitting of little intercourse or communication between them.

The only source of commerce that this country at present possesses, arises from its numerous herds of black cattle, which for the extent and capacity of the country, is a mere trifle, not exceeding 50,000 to 60,000 hides, and 25,000 to 30,000 quintals of tallow annually. The revenues consist of exorbitant duties and dues amounting to about 125 percent on prime cost, on goods formally entered at the custom-house, to be disposed of in barter for the hides and tallow. These prohibitory exactions defeat their object, by the encouragement they afford to smuggling, three-fourths of the goods introduced into the country being run ashore, and the remaining one fourth only passing through the customs. The funds thus raised are divided among the Governor, the Commander of the Forces, custom House officers and other self constituted authorities and officials; as of late years they have totally disregarded the nominations of the Mexican Government, electing their own officers; and the Government, making a merit of necessity, confirmed their appointments.

The Governor [Alvarado], who seven years ago was appraiser of custom house Goods, is an ignorant, dissipated man, quite devoid of respectability and character; and the commander of the forces [Vallejo], the next in rank and standing, who was, a few years back, a Lieutenant in the Army, has no pretension to character or respectabil-

<sup>21</sup> By comparing the above statement with that contained in paragraph 32 of his letter of November 25, 1841, *ante*, and remembering that the earlier statement was intended for the eyes of his company alone, while the later one is meant for the eye of the government, one obtains an instructive side-light on Simpson's methods.

ity, and, like most others in the country, betrays a gross want of honesty and veracity, while much jealousy and ill will exists between these great men, who are total strangers to every feeling of honor, honesty, or patriotism, and I believe, are ready to sell themselves and their country, at a moment's notice, to the highest bidder.<sup>22</sup>

Of the 600 foreign residents about 400 are Americans and about 100 British. The former not only from their numbers, but from their pushing and active habits, and forward character, have much influence, and may be said to give law to the country. Many of the British residents are much respected, and the feelings of the different classes of the natives is favorable to Great Britain, while they look upon the United States, and her citizens, with much jealousy and alarm.

The country from its natural advantages, possessing, as it does, the finest harbor in the Northern Pacific, in the Bay of San Francisco, and capable, as it is, of maintaining a population of some millions of agriculturists, might become invaluable to Great Britain as an outlet to her surplus population, as a stronghold and protection to her commerce, and interests in these seas, and as a market for her manufactures; and as the principal people in the country, and indeed the whole population, seem anxious to be released from the Republic of Mexico, which can afford them neither protection nor assistance, and are apprehensive that they may fall within the grasp of the United States, I have reason to believe they would require very little encouragement to declare their independence of Mexico, and place themselves under the protection of Great Britain. Indeed it has been communicated to me, confidentially, and I feel authorized to say, that the presence of a British cruiser on the coast, with a private assurance of protection from Great Britain, and appointments being given to the present higher authorities and officials which would not involve a larger sum than a few thousand pounds per annum, would be a sufficient inducement to declare themselves independent of Mexico and claim the protection of Great Britain. If Great Britain be unwilling to sanction or encourage such a declaration I feel assured, that some step will very soon be taken, with the like object, in favor of the United States.

The British residents at one time thought there was a probability of the country falling into the hands of England, in liquidation of the debts owing by the Mexican Government, but that they now seem to think would be a sacrifice of money on the part of the nation as they feel that California might be acquired without any such outlay, the people being willing to place themselves and their country at the disposal of Great Britain.

By the Treaty of 1819 between the United States and Spain, the parallel of 42° is fixed upon as the Mexican Northern, and the United States Southern, boundary, whereby the claims of Great Britain to the tract of country situated between Lat. 42° and Lat. 37° (the Bay of San Francisco) are lost sight of; whereas by the Treaty of Madrid of October 1790, between Spain and England, the latter country has a right to land and form settlements on every part of the coast or islands adjacent, "Situate to the north of the parts of the said coast already occupied by Spain", *i. e.* San Francisco which was then, and still is, the most northern settlement of that country. That strip of country

<sup>22</sup> Compare Simpson's published opinions of these officers as given in his *Narrative*, I. 348-349, and 309 ff.

which comprehends about five degrees of Latitude, and in which the Russian establishments of Ross and Bodega are situated, does not possess any good winter harbor, nor is its sea-board well adapted for settlement; but the interior country, watered by the Sacramento and its tributaries, after the great valley of the Tulares, which contains about 10,000 square miles, may be considered as about the finest part of California; and in any arrangement that may be made in regard to the partition of territory, it may be well to bear in mind the claims of Great Britain to that District of Country.

To give an idea of the fertility of this fine country, twenty returns of wheat are considered a failure, while 80 to 100 returns (even with the wretched system of cultivation now pursued, the whole of the field labor being performed by the most degraded of the Indian race I have ever met with, the liberated neophytes of the Missions) are common; and it is ascertained the country is capable of producing coffee, sugar, cocoa nut, Indigo, Tobacco, silk, wine, and tea in great perfection, while in the districts watered by the streams falling into the Bay of San Francisco, there is an inexhaustible supply of timber for ship-building. Flax and hemp of the best quality are indigenous; and it is said that coal has been found on the banks of the Sacramento, but of that I am doubtful, as the information is from a source not celebrated for veracity.

Quitting the shores of California, on the 27th of January, and getting almost immediately into the North East Trade wind, we made the Island of Owhyhee<sup>22</sup> on the 10th of February, and got into the Harbor of Honolulu in Woahoo the following day. The business of this place is increasing from year to year, principally dependent on the whalers and other vessels that rendezvous here, which may be estimated at about 100 sail per annum. These shipping require supplies of various kinds which afford a market to a considerable extent; and as many of the natives are employed in whaling, pearl fishing, in California and the Columbia, bringing the produce of their labors home, which finds circulation throughout the Islands, they afford a further market. This port is moreover becoming an entrepot for a portion of the South American, Californian, Manilla and china markets; and when the commerce of the latter country, and Japan may be thrown open to the world, which there is every reason to believe will soon be the case, there is little doubt that from the situation of these islands, being in the direct line of communication, a great entrepot will be formed here, and it will become a port of refuge and refreshment for nearly all the shipping visiting the Northern Pacific, so that no question can exist that this will in due time become a very important commercial station.

There are now at Honolulu, which is the only good harbor in the islands, and where there is a population of about 9,000 souls, six houses of business, besides the H. B. Company, principally American, who, independent of their own requisitions, receive consignments from the United States, England, China, etc., as commission merchants, the whole invoice amount of importations during the past year being about £50,000, the only outlet for which, is the demand of the shipping visiting the port for supplies, with that of the native population, and other inhabitants.

The country in point of climate is unequalled perhaps by any part within the Tropics, and as regards the quality of the soil of such por-

<sup>22</sup> Hawaii.

tions as produce vegetation, much of it being bare volcanic rock, it is well adapted for various tropical productions, such as sugar, coffee, cotton, indigo, tobacco, etc., but the experiments that have hitherto been made in raising these articles for market have not been attended with much success, owing in a great degree to the difficulty of procuring regular and cheap labor, as the natives cannot be induced by any wages to lay aside their indolent habits, and betake themselves to industry. Some of the residents, however, have lately encouraged the migration of Chinese, who are satisfied with very moderate wages, are maintained at little cost, living as they principally do upon rice and other vegetable diet, and are exceedingly industrious and tractable; and when capital can be employed under good management in prosecuting the cultivation of the different products above noticed, I have no doubt the exports from these Islands will become considerable. Sandal wood, which was formerly the great article of export from hence, is become exhausted; but there is a vegetable oil, known as *Tu-tu-i*, or candle-tree oil, [which] begins now to take the place of that article. Large quantities of this oil can be procured here, as the candle-tree is very abundant, and the oil, though inferior to linseed, nevertheless commands a price that yields a fair return to the manufacturer.

Since my arrival here I have had several communications with the governor of this island, a native chief, Kuanoa, and have seen several other of the leading chiefs, all of whom appear well disposed, and are evidently anxious to conciliate foreigners, and to stand well with other nations, especially Great Britain and the United States. They seem to consider themselves in a certain degree under the protection of Great Britain, and if they found themselves in any difficulty with or danger from any other nation, would no doubt solicit the protection of H. M's government; but although looking up to that source for protection, I am very doubtful that they would willingly place themselves under the dominion or become a dependency of any other country, unless the king and chiefs, with their descendants for several generations, were provided for by liberal pensions. They are evidently most anxious to do what is right in their commercial and other relations with foreign countries; but are too much under the influence of the Calvinist Missionary Society in the United States, who have a number of their teachers and missionaries stationed throughout the different islands; and they have had sufficient influence to get one of their own number, a narrow minded, illiterate, American [William Richards] installed as Prime Minister, or principal councillor of the King. This man never absents himself from him, and being the tool of the Missionary Society, which may be considered in a certain degree, a political Engine in the hands of the Government of the United States, the Sandwich Islands may be said to be greatly under the influence of that government. To do the missionaries justice however, it appears to me, they exercise their best judgment for the welfare and prosperity of the country, but in their over zeal, they counselled the enactment of some very strange and unusual laws which foreigners find irksome and vexatious; and as might be expected, they not infrequently divert the stream of justice from the proper course in order to favor their own friends and countrymen.

I have had several communications with Kuanoa, who is the most intelligent and important man, connected with the government, on the subject of getting Richards removed from his recent position as prime

minister, and having a more enlightened man to fill that important office. He seems to see the expediency of such change, and if a fit and proper person could be pointed out, I have no doubt they would avail themselves of his services forthwith, and from his remarks they would prefer a person recommended by the British Government to any other.

It is unfortunate that the British Government have not a more efficient and intelligent representative here, Mr. Charlton, although rather a bustling active man, being very little respected either by natives or foreigners. And if I could venture a suggestion, I should say it would be good policy to pension that gentleman off, and fill the office of consul with a man of conduct, character, and intelligence.

The British residents both at these islands and California, complain bitterly that their interests were, for a length of time, lost sight of by the British Government, in comparison with those of the subjects of the United States and France, few or no British cruisers having ever visited either these islands or California, unless casually, for the purpose of refreshment, or for the advancement of science; whereas the visits of American men-of-war have been very frequent, while those of France are becoming more so from year to year than is agreeable to the native inhabitants. There are always several British men-of-war on the Southern Pacific Station, which might without inconvenience run across with the Trades to these Islands, and, on their return, visit the coast of California, by their presence affording protection to the interests of the British residents at those places, while it would have the effect of giving to Great Britain a weight and influence in those countries which she could not otherwise obtain or possess.

The population of these Islands like every other barbarous population with whom whites have come in contact, is dwindling away very fast—indeed, the decrease is as extraordinary as it is lamentable. In the days of Vancouver, some fifty years ago, it was estimated, and, I imagine, pretty accurately so, at 400,000, but by a recent census, it is ascertained to be reduced to less than 90,000; and the deaths are to the births, in the proportion of 80 to 47½ so that if the mortality continues in the same ratio, the native population will become extinct in a very few years.

By reference to my despatches addressed to the Company, under dates 25th of November 1841, and the 1st Instant, you will find that I have reported very fully on the affairs of the Columbia, likewise those of the Northwest Coast and California, entering into some of the statistics of these districts of country; and I take the liberty of suggesting, that extracts be made from those despatches, for the information of Her Majesty's Government,<sup>24</sup> if you think they are likely to be interesting; and as I hope to get back to England in the course of November next, I shall be happy to give every further information I possess in regard to those countries.

This, together with the despatches for the Company, and some other letters will be handed to Mr. Charlton [the British Consul] for the purpose of being forwarded in the government mail-bag, by a vessel proceeding forthwith to Valparaiso. Another copy will be sent by the first ship from hence for England, and a third, *via* the Columbia, for the purpose of being forwarded overland to Canada.

It is my intention to leave these islands from the 20th to the 25th of March for Sitka, taking my passage from thence to Ochotsk, in one

<sup>24</sup> This was done, such extracts being found with this letter.



of the Russian American Company's vessels, and returning via Siberia to England.

I have the honor, etc.,

GEO. SIMPSON.

P. S. By the Brig *Nereus* which arrived here from Salem a few days ago, we learn that the *Providence*, Frigate, accompanied by the Transport or storeship, sailed from New York for the Columbia River, as it is said, for the purpose of taking military possession there on behalf of the United States. These statements are made by the Americans here with great confidence, but I cannot give them credence, as I scarcely think that government would take so decided a step without the consent of H. M. Government, which could scarcely be obtained without your knowledge. And by recent advices from Mazatlan, we learn that a governor general has been sent by Mexico, backed by a force of 150 men to assume the reins of government in California. But reports for which there is not the least foundation are of such frequent occurrence here, that little reliance can be placed upon them. It is further stated that the United States Govt are in treaty with Mexico for the district of country, situated between San Francisco and Lat. 42°, the northern Mexican Boundary, notwithstanding the claims of Great Britain to that country, founded on the discoveries of Sir Francis Drake and the Treaty of October 1790 between Spain and England.

G. S.

V. EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM SIR GEORGE SIMPSON TO SIR JOHN H. PELLY, DATED MOWEE, SANDWICH ISLANDS, MARCH 24, 1842.

I had this pleasure [of addressing you] about ten days ago from Honolulu and immediately proceeded to another island Mowee<sup>25</sup> on a visit to the king and Royal family of the Islands.

I have had much confidential intercourse and communication with the king, Queen, and Premier, likewise with the Reverend Mr. Richards, who is the great counsellor or advisor of the Government.

I have been successful in acquiring during my short acquaintance, a great degree of influence over these good people, with whom I feel much interested, and at my suggestion it has been determined that Mr. Richards will proceed to England, so as to be there about the time of my arrival. Mr. Richards will be invested with full power to enter into treaties with Great Britain, France, and the United States, and to transact important business on behalf of the King and government of these Islands; and at my suggestion, your name and that of Mr. Colville, likewise my own, will be coupled with that of Mr. Richards in the letters of credence with which he is invested, and I now forward copies of letters, the originals of which are in my possession, in order that you may be prepared for important negotiations connected with these Islands.

VI. EXTRACTS<sup>26</sup> FROM A LETTER OF SIR GEORGE SIMPSON TO THE GOVERNOR, DEPUTY GOVERNOR AND COMMITTEE OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY, DATED HUDSON'S BAY HOUSE, NOVEMBER 16, 1842.

*Par. 2.*

The voyage from Sitka to Ochotsk occupied 42 days which may be considered an average passage.

<sup>25</sup> Maui.

<sup>26</sup> Only portions of these extracts are here copied.

*Par. 3.*

In the 14th paragraph of the same despatch,<sup>27</sup> I had occasion to notice that in our voyage from Sitka to Ochotsk we fell in with one of about 200 American whalers that were fishing very successfully in the Northern Pacific between Lat. 50° and 57°. The Russian Gov<sup>mt</sup>. look upon the encroachments of U. States citizens engaged in this branch of trade with much jealousy, and as a measure of protection of their coasts and seas - - - the Russian American Company are of the opinion they would readily favor any measure likely to prove advantageous to that Association that would have for its object the protection of that source of commerce.

<sup>27</sup> Despatch of July 6, 1842, from Ochotsk, extracts from which are found in Foreign Office, America, 399.